

Legislative News



March 19, 2010

Update on Access Missouri Award Amounts

The [House Higher Education Committee](#) voted to pass on a bill that would change award amounts for the [Access Missouri program](#). [Representative Gayle Kingery's HB 1812](#), which is similar to [Senator Kurt Schaefer's SB 784](#) that was voted to pass in the [Senate Education Committee](#) a few weeks ago, would equalize the amounts students receive in Access Missouri award amounts regardless of if they choose to attend a private or public educational institution.

The major question during the meeting was not if the amounts would change, but when. The time period for implementation was debated throughout the meeting and several

dates were suggested. [Representative Margo McNeil](#) offered an amendment that would put the changes into effect for students receiving awards for the first time next fall and it was voted down. [Representative Mary Still](#) then offered a similar amendment that would implement the award changes one year later. Representative Kingery told the committee he had already turned down that idea. He explained that due to the budget crisis there will be a decrease in the amount of scholarship money available and increasing award amounts to public school students would decrease the funding for current recipients of the award. In the end, the committee agreed on a

revised version of the bill that would implement the changes in 2014. The bill has now been referred to the [House Rules Committee](#) for review.

The Access Missouri Workgroup also met this week to discuss award amounts. 10 representatives from private and public educational institutions around the state came together Tuesday evening in Columbia to discuss Access Missouri award amounts and came to an overall agreement that Missouri should move to provide equal award levels to all students, regardless of their choice to attend a private or public educational institution.

New Higher Education Bills Filed

[HB 2326 Rep. Chuck Gatschenberger](#) (R-Lake St. Louis)

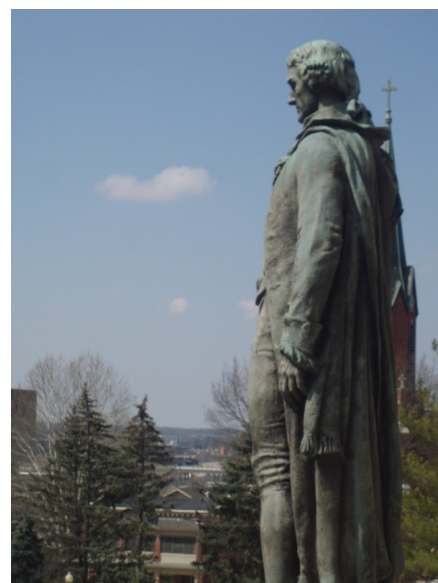
Requires public institutions of higher education within the state to adopt policies for the random and for-cause drug testing of professors, faculty, staff, or other employees.

[HB 2324 Rep. Stacy Newman](#) (D-St. Louis)

Requires educational institutions to allow individuals with service dogs to have access to their service dogs.

[HB 2349 Rep. Jerry Nolte](#) (R-Gladstone)

Entitles University of Missouri employees to a leave of absence for military or public service.



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“Rebooting Government” Meeting Set

On Tuesday, March 23, the Senate will spend the day discussing ideas that have come forth from their new [“Rebooting Government”](#) initiative. This initiative invites citizens to submit suggestions on how to rework the state’s government. On Tuesday, senators will be broken down into [eight different committees](#) to discuss the suggestions that have already been sent in and their own ideas on how to help Missouri work through this budget crisis.

The Senate has recently released the breakdown for Tuesday’s work ses-

sion. There will be 8 groups that consist of four senators each. Each group will meet to examine new ideas in one of the following categories: Agriculture/Outdoors/Department of Natural Resources, Courts/Legal/Department of Public Safety, Education, General Government/Office of Administration, Retirement, Social Programs, Tax Structure, and Transportation.

Missourians are encouraged to keep submitting their ideas through the [online site](#) created for this initiative.



Early High School Graduation Scholarship

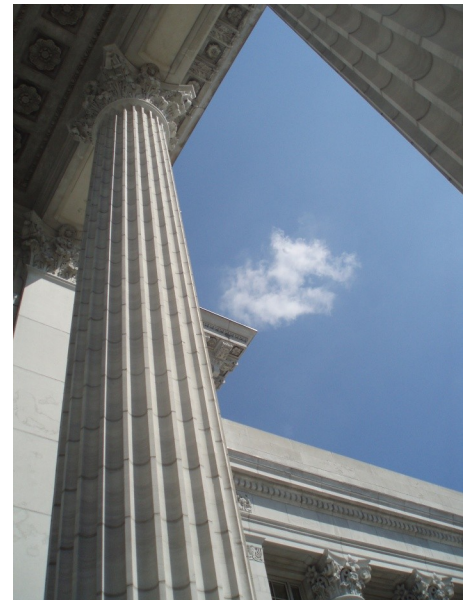
[Senator Scott Rupp's SB 907](#) was voted do pass out of the [Senate Education Committee](#) on Wednesday, March 17. This bill would create a scholarship program for students who graduate from high school in three years or less. The scholarship would be for a student's first year of college, and it would be in an amount equal to 80% of the state aid that would have been attributable to that student had the student stayed in high

school for a fourth year. The school district from which the student graduated would also receive 20% of that amount.

New Appointments Named

[Governor Nixon](#) has named new individuals to the boards of three different state universities. Ezekiel P. Tarrant was named to the [Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors](#). Lucas A. Freeland was named to the [Truman State University Board of Governors](#). Joseph B. Bosse was appointed to the [Northwest Missouri State University Board of Regents](#).

These individuals will have to go before the [Senate Gubernatorial Committee](#) and then be confirmed by the Senate before they can take their respective posts. Joseph Bosse and Ezekiel Tarrant will both go before the committee on Wednesday, March 24 at 8:30 a.m. in the Senate Lounge.



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Budget News

The [House Budget Committee](#) completed its work for this year on Thursday by sending all budget bills to the House floor. There were several significant changes impacting higher education.

The committee added \$6.5 million to the [Access Missouri Program](#). The stated goal of this addition is to maintain the current award levels despite an anticipated increase in the number of eligible students. The committee also added \$2 million for the

[Pharmacy Doctorate Program at UMKC](#), \$161,000 for the [UM telehealth network](#), \$2.4 million for [UM Hospitals and Clinics](#), and \$200,000 for the [Missouri Kidney Program](#).

On the decrease side the committee cut a total of \$1.5 million out of the \$9 million increase that the [Education Appropriations Committee](#) had added to fund the new statutory maximum awards in [Bright Flight](#). There was also a \$200,000 reduction in the [A+](#) appropriation. This

reduction represents an anticipated lapse according to the committee.

It is anticipated that the House will begin floor debate next week and that the [Senate Appropriations Committee](#) will begin its mark-up hearings shortly thereafter.



Bills Heard in the Veteran's Committee

A public hearing was conducted on [HB 2147](#) and [HB 2261](#) this week in the [House Veterans Committee](#). These two bills are identical and would exempt certain students who are dependents of recently retired military personnel from the three-year attendance requirement under the A+ Program. The hearing went well and no questions were asked of the sponsors. No one came forward during the hearing to testify in opposition of the bills. A representative from the [Missouri](#)

[Veterans of Foreign Wars](#) spoke in favor of the bill and its importance to military families. A vote for these bills has not yet been scheduled in the committee.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

The [Senate Education Committee](#) will meet for an executive session on Wednesday, March 24 at 1:30 p.m. in the Senate Lounge. The committee will hear the following bills:

[Sen. David Pearce's SB 936](#), which establishes the Missouri Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Initiative within the Department of Higher Education.

[Sen. David Pearce's SB 733](#), which modifies renewal requirements for recipients of the Bright Flight Scholarship Program who have completed military service.